

Watola, G. 2011. The Discovery of New Zealand's Birds. (3rd Edition in prep.)
Based on: Watola, G. 2009. The Discovery of New Zealand's Birds. (2nd Edition)
Arun Books, Orewa, New Zealand.
Updated and amended text supplied by George Watola, October, 2011.
Page numbers follow Watola, G. 2009 (2nd Edition)
New Zealand merganser - p. 28.

(E) **New Zealand Merganser**, *Mergus australis* (Hombron & Jacquinot 1841), Endemic
March 1840 Auckland Island.

Oliver (1955) thought it was collected in 1839, but Kear & Scarlett (1970) said it was collected in March 1840, when the French naturalist H. Jacquinot shot one at Auckland Island. This was the type specimen, a male now held at Museum d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris. It would have been collected between the 11th and 20th March. The last sighting was a pair shot on 9/1/1902. Murray Williams suggested that the final act of extinction was due to the Governor-General the 5th Earl of Ranfurly collecting the last birds for museum specimens. He also suggested that the population had been extremely small, perhaps only low double figures.

Only 26 adult skins exist in museums, and four of ducklings. The Merganser was formerly found on the mainland and Chatham Island, but was exterminated in pre-European times. Remarkably tame, they did not last long after man arrived. Millener (1999) thought the Merganser found on the Chatham Island also warrants formal recognition.